

the Appalachian Regional Commission and the Delta Regional Authority. The Appalachian Regional Commission in its 50-year history has successfully reduced the number of counties suffering from chronic poverty from 295 to 120—a reduction in high-poverty counties by almost 60 percent.

The Southeastern Crescent Regional Commission will help to leverage Federal, state, local and private investments to create jobs and eradicate unemployment. Therefore, I vehemently oppose the Broun amendment.

ENERGY AND WATER DEVELOPMENT AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2012

SPEECH OF

HON. BILL PASCRELL, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 8, 2011

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2354) making appropriations for energy and water development and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2012, and for other purposes:

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Chair, I rise in opposition to Title V of the Energy and Water Appropriations bill.

Two months ago, Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood visited New York to announce that \$450 million rejected by the State of Florida would be used for Amtrak high-speed railway improvements in the State of New Jersey. To paraphrase a long time champion of Amtrak, who currently serves as our nation's Vice President, this was definitely a big deal.

This needed funding is going to increase the speed and efficiency of Amtrak's Northeast Corridor (NEC) in New Jersey. Specifically, funding has been designated to improve the railroad's infrastructure between New Brunswick and Trenton, allowing for train speeds to be increased from 130 miles per hour, to 160 miles per hour, through improvements to NEC power system, signals, track, and catenaries. As anyone who has ridden on an Acela train during a hot day, or sat on a stagnant train during all too frequent power issues, knows that infrastructure improvements are very necessary for this busy stretch of railroad.

Residents throughout the northeast, including thousands of New Jersey commuters riding New Jersey Transit, will be able to have a more efficient ride with most with a stronger, faster, and more consistent Northeast Corridor.

New Jersey contractors, along with construction and rail laborers, are looking forward to getting to work on this needed project. I know that the people of New Jersey thought that this announcement was a done deal.

That is why I joined their surprise when I learned the Appropriations Committee had decided to divert New Jersey's needed resources and redirect this funding for disaster relief for Mississippi and Missouri River flood events.

I strongly support providing emergency disaster relief. I have great respect for my neighbor to the west, the Chairman of the Energy and Water Subcommittee. His intentions to help Americans who have been flooded out of homes and businesses are certainly laudable. We are both extremely sympathetic to flood relief as our adjoining districts have significant flooding problems that require federal assistance to resolve.

But it is short sighted to take away funding for high-speed rail for this purpose. As China zooms past us at 250 miles per hour, our nation putters along with a transportation system that cannot keep up with growing population and demand. Coming off of another month with anemic job growth, we simply cannot afford to pull funding that would create good paying planning and construction jobs that New Jersey sorely needs.

I urge the Committee to find a new offset for this emergency funding. And at the same time, I urge the Department of Transportation to obligate their rail funds quickly, so that we can get past this charade and get this important high speed rail funding out to bid.